

V. REMARKS

Claims 1, 3 and 5-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by Mizukai et al. (JP 2001-161950). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Mizukai et al. disclose a symbol variable display including a large-sized ornament component 13 on which a visible display part 14 is formed. The visible display part 14 conforms to a lens section 23 of a symbol variable display M (paragraph [0012] lines 4-6 of English translation, Fig. 2). The symbol variable display M includes a transparent member 20, a hold case member 21, symbol display units N and an electric control board 30 ([0013] lines 6-10, Fig. 4). The transparent member 20 has a single-piece construction made of transparent synthetic resin, and includes a frame part 22 and the lens part 23 that is conform to the visible display part 14 ([0014] lines 1-5, Fig. 4).

Each of the symbol display units N includes a driving board 35 and a symbol dram 37 that is rotatably controlled by a stepping motor 26 ([0016] lines 2-5, Figs. 6 and 7). In addition, the symbol display unit N includes a lighting implement 40 attached on the driving board 35 for illuminating a symbol stopped at a symbol stop line T from inside of the symbol dram 37 ([0017] lines 1-4, Fig 7). The lighting implement 40 includes: a bracket 53 fixed to a front portion of the driving board 35; and two lamps 52 provided on the bracket 53 ([0020] lines 1-4, Fig. 7). The bracket 53 has a single-piece construction made of synthetic resin that is white-colored for reflecting light, and includes: an installation portion 56 to which the lamps 52 are attached; and a reflecting plate 57 arranged at a position opposite to the visible display part 14 with respect to the lamps 52 ([0020] lines 4-10, Figs. 7 and 8).

The symbol is displayed for a front side of a pachinko machine P by the light irradiated from the lamps 52 via the lens part 23 and the visible display part 14. The light irradiated from the lamps toward the rear side is reflected by the reflecting plate 57, and the reflected light indirectly illuminates an inner region of the symbol dram 37

([0021] lines 1-14, Fig. 8). Accordingly, the visible display part 14 is uniformly and clearly illuminated.

Under this rejection, the Office Action states that Mizukai discloses a gaming machine comprising variable display means (item M), image display means (item 14), symbol illumination means (abstract), and image display assistance means (paragraph 0021).

Mizukai does not teach the elements in amended claim 1 as follows:

- (a) an image display device ... display the symbols through a flat symbol transmission face and to display an image concerning a game; and
- (b) an image display assistance device being provided lateral to an area between the variable display device and the image display device.

Regarding the element (a), as explained in the above, the image display part 14 of Mizukai conforms to the lens section 23 made of synthetic transparent resin. In addition, there is no disclosure that the image display part 14 can display image as it is. Mizukai's image display part 14 has no ability to display an image concerning a game. In addition, as shown in Fig. 8, the lens section 23 of Mizukai has a concave shape, which is different from "the flat symbol transmission face" of claim 1.

Regarding the element (b), as explained above, Mizukai teaches the light reflected by the reflecting plate 57 indirectly illuminates an inner region of the symbol dram 37. If the image display assistance device of the invention corresponds to the reflecting plate 57, the reflecting plate 57 is arranged at a position opposite to the visible display part 14 with respect to the lamps 52, i.e., arranged inside the symbol dram 37. Also, if the image display assistance device corresponds to the bracket 53 of Mizukai, as shown Figs. 4, 6 and 7 of Mizukai, since a front side of the symbol dram 37 protrudes from the driving board 35 when viewed from the lateral direction,

the bracket 53 is not provided lateral to an area between the symbol dram 37 and the lens part 23 (image display part 14).

It is respectfully submitted that the rejection is improper because the applied art fails to teach each and every element of claim 1 as discussed above. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 is allowable over the applied art.

Claims 3 and 5-7 depend from claim 1 and includes all of the features of claim 1. Thus, the dependent claims are allowable at least for the reason claim 1 is allowable as well as for the features they recite.

Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 4 and 8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by Ozaki et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2001/0031658). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Ozaki et al. disclose a game machine has a back side display unit composed of reels for displaying back patterns and a front side display unit composed of transparent EL panels for displaying overlapping patterns overlapping with the back patterns (abstract). A fluorescent lamp 29 as an internal illumination is attached to intermediate panel 27 ([0045]), and is used to illuminate the surfaces of reels 30a, 30b and 30c ([0046], Figs. 1 and 2).

Regarding this rejection of Claim 1, the Office Action states that Ozaki teaches a fluorescent lamp 29 as image display assistance means of the claimed invention.

However, the fluorescent lamp 29 is provided at a front side of the reels 30a, 30b and 30c, as shown in Fig. 1. That is, Ozaki fails to teach "the image display assistance device provided lateral to an area between the variable display device and the image display device" as claimed.

It is respectfully submitted that the rejection is improper because the applied art fails to teach each and every element of claim 1 as discussed above. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 is allowable over the applied art.

With regard to claim 8, the Office Action states that Ozaki teaches a fluorescent lamp 29 as side elimination means of the claimed invention.

Similar to the reason described above regarding claim 1, Ozaki teaches the fluorescent lamp 29 is provided to face the reels 30a, 30b and 30c. However, Ozaki does not teach the side illumination device as amended claim 8.

It is respectfully submitted that the rejection is improper because the applied art fails to teach each and every element of claim 8 as amended and discussed above. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that claim 8 is allowable over the applied art.

Claim 4 depends from claim 1 and includes all of the features of claim 1. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the dependent claim is allowable at least for the reason claim 1 is allowable as well as for the features it recites.

Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by Fuji et al. (JP 2001-143375). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Fuji discloses a slot machine including a light source unit 46C that has a body frame 65, a support frame 66 having opening portions 69, two side plates 67 and 70, light guide plates 68a to 68c arranged in the rear of the opening portions 69, and LEDs 42 arranged on the side plate 67. The light emitted from LEDs 27 proceeds to a width direction of reel 8 while expanding in front and rear directions via the light guide plates 18. The light expanding in the front direction and the light expanding in the rear direction and reflected by the body frame 65 is introduced to the opening portions 69 in the front direction (abstract, Figs. 16and17). The light source 21 (light

source unit 46) is provided at the rear side (inner side) of the reel 8 ([0046] lines 4-7 of the English translation, Figs. 9 and 13).

The light source unit 46C of Fuji is provided inside the reel 8 to illuminate the symbol from the inner side of the reel 8.

Under this rejection, the Office Action states that Fuji teaches image display assistance means in abstract.

As explained above, the light source unit 46C of Fuji is provided inside the reel 8 to illuminate the symbol from the inner side of the reel 8.

In contrast, the image display assistance device of the invention is provided lateral to an area between the variable display device and the image display device, that is, the image display assistance device is arranged outside the variable display device. Fuji fails to teach the image display assistance device as claimed.

Fuji teaches that the light source unit includes a main flame 43 integrally formed with an attachment 50 that is attached to a support plate 10 ([0033], Fig 9). As shown in Fig. 9, the support plate 10 is arranged lateral to the reel 8. However, a front portion of the reel 8 protrudes from the support plate 10 when viewed from the lateral direction. Further, there is no disclosure of the support plate 10 having an ability to assist illuminating the image display device. Therefore, even if the support plate 10 of Fuji is regarded as the image display assistance device, Fuji fails to teach the image display assistance device of the amended claim 2.

It is respectfully submitted that the rejection is improper because the applied art fails to teach each and every element of claim 2 as discussed above. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that claim 2 is allowable over the applied art.

Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Further, Applicants assert that there are also reasons other than those set

forth above why the pending claims are patentable. Applicants hereby reserve the right to submit those other reasons and to argue for the patentability of claims not explicitly addressed herein in future papers.

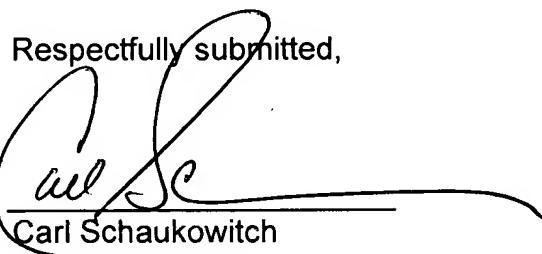
In view of the foregoing, reconsideration of the application and allowance of the pending claims are respectfully requested. Should the Examiner believe anything further is desirable in order to place the application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' representative at the telephone number listed below.

Should additional fees be necessary in connection with the filing of this paper or if a Petition for Extension of Time is required for timely acceptance of the same, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 18-0013 for any such fees and Applicant(s) hereby petition for such extension of time.

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Respectfully submitted,

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Enclosure(s): Amendment Transmittal
 Petition for Extension of Time (three months)

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